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Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, Brigadier-General U. S. Army, Brevet Major-General U. S. Army, Chief of Engineers. By Hampton L. Carson.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, Dec. 5, 1884.)

The life of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys was one of reflection and action, of incident and character. A man of science, a brilliant soldier, an accomplished scholar, a polished gentleman, the lineal descendant of distinguished men, and the inheritor of their talents and virtues, he displayed in every walk of life the highest qualities, and combined the most opposite characteristics. Born to command, he easily attained the front rank in every species of labor which he undertook, yet his modesty was as great as it was rare. His intercourse with men was graced by a charm of manner, a simplicity of diction, a purity of sentiment, a gentle resistlessness of will that armed him with a power which few could oppose with success; or if, misled by these, they had dared to stir the half-hidden fire of his nature, they would have found him as terrible as Saul. Whether we view him as an engineer, investigating the destructive dynamics of our floods, and demonstrating the laws by which they are governed; or as a division commander leading his troops to the fierce assault, and animating them by his personal example; or as the chief of staff of the commander of a great army, sagacious, practical and fertile in resources; or as a corps commander, skillful and intrepid; or as the chief of engineers, broad-minded and profound; or as a military writer, luminous yet terse, we find his career marked with capacity, energy, and success. As Sallust said of Jugurtha, he was, indeed, both brave in action and wise in council; qualities very seldom united in the same person, precaution being generally accompanied with timidity, and courage with rashness. The most conspicuous of his virtues were truth, integrity and honor. A devoted husband, a tender father, an affectionate brother, a generous and unflinching friend, with a chivalrous regard for woman worthy of the best days of heraldry, he was in public and in private, a man to be feared, to be trusted, to be admired, to be loved; a man with whom no one could trifle, and whom no one would care to offend.

The name of Humphreys is of Norman origin, and can be traced for a thousand years. It occurs in Doomsday book as Humfridus—subsequently spelled as Humfrey or Humphry—and six coats-of-arms, all very ancient, appear to have been brought into the Herald's office in 1340, upon its first establishment.* The crest of one branch of the family—a lion with his dexter paw upon a nag's head—refers most probably to the conquest of Wales, where the sturdy victors dwelt upon the lands of which they gat possession through their swords. Here they remained for seven hundred

*See Marshaling and coat-of-arms presented to Gen. David Humphreys, LL.D., by Ozias Humphreys, artist, of London, about 1790; preserved among his papers and presented by the widow of William Humphreys, nephew of Gen. David Humphreys, to Dr. Frederick Humphreys in 1863. Illuminated copy of the coats-of-arms of the Humphreys family in possession of the writer.

years, when one of their number, Daniel Humphreys, of Porthwen, Merionethshire, Wales, came to Pennsylvania in 1682, and settled in Haverford township, now of Delaware county, about seven miles west of Philadelphia, and was followed the next year by his mother Elizabeth, the widow of Samuel Humphreys, with her younger children.* He had joined the Friends in his native country, "and left such a testimony behind him as is and was of good savor."† In 1695 he was married to Hannah, the daughter of Dr. Thomas Wynn, of Merion. They had many children, among whom were Joshua, Edward and Charles. Joshua was the great-grandfather of the subject of this sketch. Edward acquired a high reputation as a physician and surgeon, and was beloved for his benevolence and humanity. Charles Humphreys was a man of fine talents, and of great influence in the county. In 1764, he was elected to the Provincial Assembly, and was reelected annually to that office, until 1775, when he was chosen a member of the Continental Congress. In that body he contended with energy against the oppressive measures of Great Britain, but, fettered by his oath of allegiance, and by what he believed to be the views of a large majority of his constituents, he voted with John Dickerson, Thomas Willing, Edward Biddle, and Andrew Allen, against the Declaration of Independence. He then retired to private life, and though sympathizing with his country, took no part in the struggle.‡

Joshua Humphreys, the son of Joshua, and grandson of Daniel Humphreys, the immigrant, was the grandfather of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys. He was born in Haverford township in the year 1751. His mother was Sarah, the daughter of Edward and Elinor Williams, of Blockley. His ancestors were thoroughly Welsh, and all of them Quakers. With only the advantages of such an early education as the common schools of the country afforded at that day, Joshua was apprenticed at a tender age to a ship carpenter of Philadelphia. Before the completion of his apprenticeship his instructor died, and he was at once placed at the head of the establishment, and managed the business for the widow for several years with prudence and success. Possessing a comprehensive and philosophical mind, he soon came to be regarded as the first naval architect in the country. Such was his eminence, that after the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, and when it became apparent that our Government must have a navy, Mr. Humphreys was consulted, offi-

* Elizabeth Humphreys and her children were all Friends. She brought a certificate with her that recommends her "for an honest, faithful woman yt has been serviceable in her place, and praiseworthy in her conversation," and her children "as tender plants growing in that which they do profess, even the truth and Grace of God." Copy of original certificate in possession of the widow of Gen. A. A. Humphreys, Smith's History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, p. 471.

† Biographies of early settlers and eminent men of Delaware county. History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, by George Smith, M.D., p. 471.

‡ Centennial collection. Charles Humphreys, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 1, p. 83. Smith's History of Delaware County, p. 472.

cially, and his views, which had been communicated to the Hon. Robert Morris, in a letter dated January 6th, 1793, but more in detail to Gen. Knox, then Secretary of War, were, in the main, adopted. He was the first naval constructor of the United States, and several of our first ships of war, the *Constitution*, the *Chesapeake*, the *Congress*, the *Constellation* and the *President* were built according to his plans, and the *United States* was built at his own yard under his immediate direction.* These were the famous ships whose marvelous success may be gathered from the annals of the naval warfare with Tripoli in 1804 and with Great Britain in 1812.†

Very justly Mr. Humphreys has been called the Father of the American Navy. The last thirty years of his life were spent in quiet retirement on a part of his patrimonial estate, Ponte-Reading, in Haverford. Here he died in 1838, at the advanced age of eighty-seven years, with mental faculties unimpaired.

Samuel Humphreys, a son of Joshua, was educated by his father as a naval constructor, and some of the most beautiful ships in our navy were from his models.‡

In 1813 he was appointed naval constructor for the Philadelphia Navy Yard, and, in 1826, by President John Quincy Adams, Chief Naval Constructor of the United States, a position which he held until his death in 1846. One incident in his career deserves to be narrated. When Izakoff, a special ambassador, who had been sent to America by the Emperor Alexander, with authority to engage the best shipbuilding talent for the construction of a Russian navy, sought to fulfill the imperial instructions, he sent, through Mr. Richard Peters, for "Sam. Humphreys." He offered him a salary of \$60,000 per annum, a town house and a country residence

* The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, now deceased, p. 588.

Naval History of the United States, by J. Fenimore Cooper, Vol. 1, p. 149.

American State Papers. Vol. i, p. 402.

‡ The Commencement of the United States Navy, 1794, by Rear Admiral George H. Preble, The United Service, February, 1884, pp. 139-149.

† The main idea of Mr. Humphreys was that the ships should be heavier in tonnage and artillery than their rates would seem to authorize; they proved fast sailers, capable of enduring heavy battering, and of inflicting severe injuries in a short space of time. So terrible was their armament that the British termed them "74's in disguise."

‡ Clement Humphreys, the eldest son of Joshua, gave evidence, when a mere lad, of spirit and daring. Infuriated over an attack in the columns of the *Aurora* upon the Federalists and upon the late President Washington, on the 4th of April, 1797, he violently assaulted the editor, who was visiting the frigate, the *United States*, then on the stocks at Philadelphia. He was tried for assault and battery and convicted, and was fined \$50, and ordered to give security in the sum of two thousand dollars to keep the peace. Such was the admiration of his conduct on the part of the Federalist merchants of the city that they paid the fine and furnished the security. President Adams subsequently sent him to France with special despatches—a reward, as hostile critics asserted, for having thrashed a Republican.

The *Aurora*, General Advertiser, Philadelphia, April 6, 1797. History of Philadelphia, by Thompson Westcott, Chap. cccxxxi. Hildreth's History of the United States, second series, Vol. ii, p. 44.

to be maintained by the Czar, horses and coaches, and servants, and if these were insufficient, he could name his own terms. After a day's consideration, Humphreys replied: "The salary is greater than I could earn; more than I need; more than I want; more than I could use. As to the town house and country-house, I need but one, and that should be near my business. As to the coaches and servants, I always walk and wait upon myself, and should find myself unable to govern a multitude of servants. I do not know that I possess the talents my friend, Mr. Peters, ascribes to me; but I do know and feel that, whether my merit be great or small, I owe it all to the flag of my country, and that is a debt I must pay." *

In the history of refusals of dazzling offers, where can the parallel of this instance of lofty patriotism be found?

Such a man was the father of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys.

The maternal grandfather of General Humphreys, and for whom he was named, was Andrew Atkinson, of Prehend Caven-Garden, Ireland, and his maternal grandmother was Jane Murray, the daughter of Sir Archibald Murray, the descendant of that Murray of Black Barony, in Scotland, who espoused the cause of the Pretender. The story runs that Andrew Atkinson, then a gallant ensign in the British army, of nineteen years of age, first saw Jane Murray, a beautiful girl of sixteen, on the battlements of Edinburgh Castle, and, captivated by her charms, gracefully lowered his colors as he passed. He sought and obtained an introduction, which resulted in their elopement and marriage. He subsequently purchased a plantation in Florida, upon the St. John's river, and after the cession of Florida by Spain, came to Philadelphia, where he died. His daughter, Letitia Atkinson, met Samuel Humphreys at Dungeness, the house of the widow of General Nathaniel Greene, upon Cumberland Island, Georgia, whither he had been sent, as a youth of eighteen, to inspect live-oak timber for the great battle ships, and the meeting led to their marriage. They had eight children, of whom Andrew Atkinson Humphreys was the second son.

I have dwelt at length upon the ancestry of General Humphreys, because in the analysis of his character it is interesting to trace to their source his many admirable traits.† The blood of Normandy, Scotland, Ireland and Wales was commingled in his veins, an apt admixture for the production of thorough manliness. From his father's side he inherited his dauntless spirit, his inflexible resolution, his spotless integrity, his partisanship and great philosophical powers of mind. From his mother, who was a woman of loveliness and grace, his exquisite charm of manner, his strict self-control, his unwillingness to believe evil report of any one, his

* Samuel Humphreys, Chief Naval Constructor of the United States, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. viii. p. 216.

† Mr. Galton, in his work on *Hereditary Genius*, marshals an imposing array of evidence in support of his proposition, that genius, talent or whatever we term great mental capacity, follows the law of organic transmission—runs in families, and is an affair of blood and breed.

readiness to admit of every palliation of bad conduct, without any weakness or credulity of judgment, and his exalted admiration of woman. His nature responded to his mother's gentlest touch, and she always spoke of him as "my sympathizing child."

Andrew Atkinson Humphreys was born in the city of Philadelphia, November 2, 1810. As a boy, he was fearless, upright and honorable, with a determined spirit of resistance to anything like tyranny or personal affront; first in all manly sports and a leader in daring exploits. His early education was received at "Tommy Watson's," the Germantown Academy, and the school of an Englishman named Warren, who unfortunately used the rod. To the indignity of personal chastisement young Humphreys was too spirited to submit, and no command, entreaty or persuasion could induce him to return to the school, though the teacher himself called upon his parents, regretting the loss of a pupil of talents and ability, and promising an entire change of treatment. He then went to the Moravian school for boys at Nazareth, Pennsylvania. In after life he frequently alluded with emotion to the happy days spent at the latter institution, where he said he imbibed a taste for reading and music. Subsequently, he had a private tutor, and in his seventeenth year went to West Point, July 1, 1827; was graduated thirteenth in a class of thirty-three, July 1, 1831, and was assigned to the Second Artillery, with the rank of Brevet Second Lieutenant. Among his classmates were Roswell Park, Henry Clay, a son of the distinguished statesman, George Turner, Samuel C. Ridgeley, George H. Talcot, William H. Emory, William Chapman, Thomas McKean, Henry Van Rensselaer, Edward Ogden, Samuel G. Curtis, and James Williams.*

He served in garrison at Fort Moultrie, S. C., in 1831; was assigned to temporary duty at the United States Military Academy, in 1832; to the Cherokee Nation in 1832 and 1833; and to Augusta Arsenal, Ga., and Fort Marion, Fla., 1833 and 1834. He was on Topographical duty, making surveys in West Florida and at Cape Cod, Mass., in 1834 and 1835, and participated in the Florida war against the Seminole Indians in 1836, being engaged in the action of Oloklikaha, March 31, 1836, and the action near Micanopy, June 9, 1836.

On September 30, 1836, he resigned his commission as an officer of the United States Army, and during the years 1836-'38, as Civil Engineer, assisted the late General Hartman Bache on the plans of Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse and Crow Shoal Breakwater, Delaware bay.

Upon the re-organization of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838, General Humphreys was re appointed in the Army, with the rank of First Lieutenant in that Corps.

He served in charge of works for the improvement of Chicago harbor, Ill.; as Assistant Topographical Engineer of survey of Oswego harbor defences, N. Y., and in charge of survey of Whitehall harbor, N. Y., in

*Class of 1831, Cullum's Biographical Register of the Graduates of West Point.

1839; as Assistant in the Topographical Bureau at Washington, D. C., 1840-'41; in the Florida war, 1842; on construction of bridge at Washington, D. C., 1842; as Assistant in Topographical Bureau at Washington, D. C., 1842-'43-'44; as Assistant in charge of the Coast Survey Office at Washington, D. C., 1844-'49, and on surveys in the field, 1849-'50.

He was engaged in making a Topographic and Hydrographic survey of the Delta of the Mississippi river, with a view to its protection from inundation, and deepening the channels at its mouth, 1850-'51, continuing in general charge of the work and preparing his able and voluminous report thereon, till 1861. In 1853 he was sent on special duty to Europe to examine means for the protection of delta rivers from inundation. He was in general charge, under the War Department, of the office duties at Washington, D. C., connected with the explorations and surveys for railroads from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean, and geographical explorations west of the Mississippi river, from 1854 to 1861, and was a member of the Lighthouse Board, from 1856 to 1862; of the Board "to revise programme of instruction at the United States Military Academy," and of the Commission created by act of Congress "to examine into the organization, system of discipline, and course of instruction at the United States Military Academy, 1860."*

It would be difficult to overestimate the value and extent of the labors of General Humphreys in the field of science. I can dwell only upon his greatest work: *The Report upon the Physics and Hydraulics of the Mississippi River; upon the Protection of the Alluvial Region against Overflow; and upon the Deepening of the Mouths; Based upon Surveys and Investigations, made under the Acts of Congress directing the Topographical and Hydrographical Survey of the Delta of the Mississippi River, with such Investigations as might lead to determine the most Practicable Plan for Securing it from Inundation, and the best mode of Deepening the Channels at the Mouths of the River.*†

The title but feebly suggests the vast scope of the work.

The Mississippi river, below the mouth of the Missouri, changes its character from a gentle current and a clear tide to a turbid, boiling torrent, tremendous in volume and force. Thenceforth, for thirteen hundred miles, it pursues a devious course, washing away banks and islands here, rebuilding them there, absorbing tributary after tributary, until at last it is itself swallowed up in the greater volume of the Gulf. Just above the mouth of the Ohio begins a great alluvial plain, some fifty miles in

* Statement of Services of Brigadier-General Andrew A. Humphreys, Corps of Engineers, Brevet Major-General U. S. A. General Orders, No. 10, Headquarters Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., Washington, D. C., December 29, 1883.

† Submitted to the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, War Department, 1861. Prepared by Captain A. A. Humphreys and Lieutenant H. L. Abbot, Corps of Topographical Engineers, United States Army. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1861. 4to, pp. 456; with an Appendix, pp. 146, and 20 plates. Reprinted, with Additions, in 1876.

width, which is mostly below the level of the floods. In extent the valley of the Mississippi is equal in surface to all Europe, except Russia, Norway and Sweden. It has no topographical obstructions. It contains immense navigable rivers, and is connected with vast inland seas. A great historian, with the inspiration of a prophet and the fire of a poet, has predicted that "with such a varied and splendid entourage—an imperial cordon of States—nothing can prevent the Mississippi valley from becoming in less than three generations the centre of human power."* The problem of protection against overflow is the great practical question involving the prosperity of that entire region. Millions of dollars had been fruitlessly expended by the States of Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri, through want of concert, want of knowledge and misdirected and divided effort. Politics, too, embroiled the results, so that when, in September, 1850, the Federal Government granted to the several States bordering on the river all the swamp and overflowed lands within their limits, remaining unsold, in order to provide a fund to reclaim the districts liable to inundation, the planters in the lower valley of the river, alarmed lest the effect of the reclamation of vast swamps above should tend to increase the floods below, invoked the aid of the General Government in the necessary surveys for investigating the matter. From this movement the Delta Survey took its origin.†

From the beginning the work was in charge of Captain Humphreys. He began field operations in November, 1850, but was compelled by severe illness, occasioned by exposure and overwork in surveying, to suspend them in the summer of 1851. He long remained an invalid, and upon his recovery was overwhelmed with other professional duties—among which may be named the general charge of all the Pacific Railroad surveys—so that the river work was not resumed until 1857. From that time, at his own request, he had the assistance of Lieutenant H. L. Abbot, to whom, with rare and characteristic liberality, he attributed an equal share in the authorship of the work. In his letter to the Bureau, Captain Humphreys, in speaking of the work, says: "It involved an amount of labor and study which will not, perhaps, be fully appreciated even by professional persons."

A scheme of field observations was devised covering a multitude and variety of observations in a vast region of more than one and a quarter millions of square miles, including the basins of the eight principal tributaries of the river, draining the entire surface between the Rocky mountains and the Alleghenies—the Missouri, Ohio, Upper Mississippi, Arkansas, Red, White, Yazoo, and St. Francis. The work was distributed among topographical, hydrographical and hydrometrical parties. An

* History of the American Civil War, by John William Draper, M.D., LL.D. Vol. 1, pp. 62.

† In the preparation of this account I have been assisted in my study of the original work by an able and exhaustive review of the Report of Humphreys and Abbot, by Edwin Hale Abbot, A.M., reprinted from the North American Review, April, 1862.

enormous mass of facts and data was collected and tabulated, showing the length, slope, dimensions of cross-sections, discharge, area of basin, downfall of rain, and drainage of the Mississippi and its tributaries. In this way all of the important facts connected with the various physical conditions of the river were ascertained, reduced and digested; the laws uniting them were determined, and out of seeming chaos the beautiful results of science were evolved, leading to simple and practical conclusions, and the great problem of protection against inundation was solved. Various suggestions, theories, and expedients, which had been much discussed in Europe, and broached in this country by Charles Ellet, were disproved and condemned. In the language of the Report: "It has been *demonstrated* that no advantage can be derived either from diverting tributaries or constructing reservoirs, and that the plans of cut-offs and of new or enlarged outlets to the Gulf, are too costly and too dangerous to be attempted."

The decision was in favor of the system of levees.

The question of the protection of the valley from inundation having been satisfactorily determined, attention was next directed to the improvement of navigation by the deepening of the mouths of the river. The first problem was one of national, the second of international, importance. In the same thorough way the facts relating to the delta were collected and studied, as well as those relating to the mouths of the river and their bars, and a plan was reported for increasing the depth of water on the bars. A ship canal was urged to obviate the difficulties and dangers of the passes, while the temporary and fallacious expedient of jetties was strongly condemned.

The spirit in which the entire work was executed is that of the well-chosen motto of the title page—the words of Franklin to Abbé Souliave—"I approve much more your method of philosophizing, which proceeds upon actual observations, makes a collection of facts, and concludes no further than those facts will warrant."

In addition to the purely scientific features of the work, it contains chapters of the utmost historic value. In chapter iii, the state of the science of hydraulics, as applied to rivers, is exhaustively considered. A complete chronological list is given of all the works bearing upon it, with a résumé of their contents. It sets forth all that was previously known about river hydraulics, both in Europe and in this country; with special studies, in part conducted by General Humphreys when in Europe, of the Nile, Neva, Rhine, Rhone, Garonne and the Po. The phenomena of great floods from 1718 to 1859 are fully stated, and a succinct account is given of the progress of the levee system in the Mississippi valley.

Finally, in elaborate appendices, each one of which is systematic and complete, the statistics are given upon which all computations are based. It is needless to state that the mathematical features, together with the maps and diagrams, are as elaborate as the other portions of the work.

A political lesson of the utmost consequence in its relations to the Fed-

eral Government is embodied in this report. The National Government accomplished in twelve years the solution, both in principle and in detail, of two great problems of internal improvement—protection from overflow and the deepening of the water on the bars—problems which had baffled all the efforts of four separate States for a century and a half. It is clear that the power which rules at the source of the great river must hold the channel, the delta and the mouths. Thus the Mississippi becomes at once the promise, the pledge and the bond of Union. “Whoever is master of the Mississippi is lord of the continent.” The security of our national integrity must then be found, not only in constitutional provisions, congressional enactments, and in the coercive measures of war, but also in identity of commercial and industrial interests, supported by the vast possibilities of their indefinite development.

To return to our text.

An able reviewer says: “It is not too much to say, after a careful study of this report, that, as a work of science, it will not suffer by comparison with any in our language, while it is, in its special department, without a peer, and almost without a rival. It finds the whole subject of river hydraulics a confused congeries of discordant theories and untenable hypotheses, the offspring of insufficient generalizations. It leaves it a determined science, the result of wide observation of facts, acute and laborious combination and rigid and logical scientific analysis. Its authors may well be proud of their work, for it places them in the front rank of scientific men, and shows them to be the discoverers of a science, the first fruits merely of which appear in their deductions of the laws which regulate the flowage of the Mississippi.”*

The work has been translated twice into German, twice into French, once if not twice into Italian, and once into Hungarian.

In 1865-'66, Humphreys published a voluminous report, entitled *Examination of the Mississippi Levees*. In 1875, General Humphreys, then the Chief of Engineers, published *Memoranda relating to the Improvement of the Entrance to the Mississippi River by Jetties*,† in which he enforced his views in favor of a ship canal. Elaborate diagrams were annexed. In 1878, Humphreys and Abbot published a reply to criticisms upon their work by Dr. Hagen, Director-General of Public Works in Prussia.‡ The tone of foreign criticism, with this exception, had been uniformly favorable and courteous.

We now pass from the consideration of Gen. Humphreys' labors as a man of science to view him as a soldier in the field. In this respect his skill as an engineer was of the utmost value. He had a quick eye for

* North American Review *ut supra*.

† Being Appendix S, 12, of the Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1875. Washington, 1875.

‡ Physics and Hydraulics of the Mississippi. Reply to certain criticisms made by Dr. Hagen, Director-General of Public Works, Prussia. Von Nostrand's Eclectic Engineering Magazine, No. cix, January, 1878, Vol. xviii.

topography, and foresaw with remarkable accuracy how far the peculiarities of the region through which he campaigned would be available for the purposes of marching, assault, or defence. Col. Paine, "the pathfinder of the army of the Potomac," has said: "For general as well as intimate acquaintance with the country in which he was operating, and the troops against whom he was engaged—in fact, the general relative situation of affairs—Humphreys was second to no other Union General."

In 1861, Humphreys was a Major of Topographical Engineers. He was placed upon the staff of Gen. McClellan, with the rank of Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and became the Chief Topographical Engineer of the Army of the Potomac. When the advance upon Richmond was under consideration, though it is not recorded that he advocated a direct advance, yet it is known that he favored the "Urbana route," in preference to the movement up the Peninsula. He was engaged at the siege of Yorktown, in the battle of Williamsburgh, and in the movements and operations before Richmond and to the James river in 1862. His services at Malvern Hill were most conspicuous. He closed the lines, or, in other words, posted all the corps except the Fifth, and one division of the Fourth. The dispositions which he made contributed to the successful results of that eventful day, while the neglect to shell a wood, as he desired, allowed its occupation by the enemy, from which they had to be driven by force.

On the return north of the Army of the Potomac, he was transferred from staff or engineering duty, to the command of a division of new troops, with which he pressed to Antietam, "marching with commendable activity," a march of more than twenty-three miles on a dark night to take part in the expected battle of the next day. After that battle he made a reconnoissance in the Shenadoah valley, which has been spoken of as "one of the finest and most thorough possible to be made, indicating the possession of every quality necessary to a thorough soldier."

At the battle of Fredericksburg, 13th of December, 1862, he personally led a charge, which for desperate valor has few equals in the annals of war.

When Sumner was directed to storm the heights above the town, he selected the divisions of French and Hancock for the assault.

The position to be carried had by nature strong defensive advantages. Between the canal—which had to be crossed—and the crown of the ridge of hills the space was covered by fences and buildings, while at the foot of the ascent proper to Marye's Heights a sunken road, running behind a high stone wall, afforded as perfect a defensive work as if planned and constructed by engineers. This line of defense was still further strengthened by fortifications in the rear, which rose tier upon tier, so that the Confederate infantry was enabled to deliver a concentric fire. Indeed the head of the assaulting column "seemed to propel itself into a yawning gulf of flame."

The first attack was made by French, with the Third Division of the Second Corps, with a boldness and steadiness that carried him to within

thirty or forty paces of the wall. He was badly repulsed, and withdrew, leaving twelve hundred dead and wounded out of about twice that number. The second attack was made by Hancock with the First Division of the Second Corps. His line broke within twenty-five paces of the wall. In the short space of a quarter of an hour two thousand and thirteen lifeless or mangled forms were added to the victims of the former attempt.

Humphreys was next sent over. Gen. Palfrey says : "Some of the very best fighting that was done at Fredericksburg was done by the Third Division of the Fifth Corps. The division was commanded by Gen. Humphreys, who was probably the best officer in the Army of the Potomac that day. He was a thoroughly educated soldier, possessed of a quick eye and a clear head, and a man of fiery energy. That the fighting his division did was so good was due to him."*

He had but two brigades, one commanded by Col. Allabach, the other by Brigadier-General E. B. Tyler. Several of his regiments had never before been in battle. His men divested themselves of their knapsacks, haversacks and overcoats, and then moved across the canal. Humphreys in person formed the leading brigade in a ravine about three or four hundred yards from the stone wall, and then led the advance in line of battle, but found to his surprise that Couch's men were lying down behind a small fold in the ground about one hundred and fifty yards or less from the wall. He then ordered a bayonet charge, but failed to carry the wall, owing to the disorder into which his men were thrown by those who were lying on the ground several ranks deep. Upon turning back to his second brigade, he discovered that artillery had been placed by Hooker on the very ground his troops must pass over.† Quickly riding to every gun he put a stop to the firing, and led forward his second brigade, directing it to run over the men in front. Notwithstanding the confusion incident to the effort to obey this order, the onward impetus of the line carried it close to the wall, when a sheet of flame ran along its entire length, accompanied by a long roll of thunder, and wrapped the column in an embrace of fire. Twilight was fast deepening, and amid the thick mists of the bottom land every discharge was as brilliant as the trail of a rocket, thus adding to the grandeur and terrors of the scene.

Two horses were shot under the intrepid leader, who hastily mounted a third, and continued to ride about amid the rain of missiles, bearing a charmed life; his clothing was pierced and rent, but his person was unhurt. Every officer of his staff but one, his son, was dismounted, and his horse was badly wounded. In vain did Humphreys endeavor to halt his men as they turned slowly backward. In vain did he endeavor to remedy the disorder occasioned by the troops lying down whom he had been sent

* Antietam and Fredericksburg, by Gen. Palfrey. Scribner's Campaigns of the Civil War.

† Note to p. 252 of Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, by Wm. Swinton. Appendix, Revision and Re-issue. Scribner, 1882. Humphreys' Charge on Marye Heights.

to support ; in vain did he endeavor to induce them to rise and join in the charge, and with some bitterness he subsequently wrote that had they been withdrawn before he moved forward, a different result would have followed. Indeed, so near was he to carrying the wall and heights that the enemy were actually moving their guns out of the batteries, and on the right they were beginning to quit the wall.*

"His division, like the third breaker upon a beach, left its traces of blood and wrecks a few paces further on, and nearer to the enemy than the preceding two, lingered longer, strove harder to maintain itself so far, and to accomplish the impossible. Finally it withdrew, singing in chorus, to show that although shattered physically, morally its spirits were unshaken. His charge will yet be blazoned forth in history as one of the noblest efforts of Northern resolution, or, as he expressed it, of one of Kearney's exhibitions of valor "magnificent." †

The reckless bravery of Humphreys as displayed on this and other occasions, proved that he had a keen relish for conflict. Not that he delighted in slaughter, or had the slightest trace of ferocity in his nature, but the romantic love of peril and adventure, the wild rapture of battle (*certaminis gaudia*), the thrilling occasion, the mighty shock of armed men, the encounter of mind with mind, of strategy matched against strategy, of force directed against force, the issues trembling in the balance, and the possible grand result, aroused all the tremendous energies of his intellect, and transformed the quiet scholar into the very embodiment of resistless heroism. Like the war horse, in Job, he mocked at fear and was not affrighted ; neither turned he back from the sword. "Of all the sublime sights within the view and comprehension of man," he wrote, "the grandest, the most sublime, is a great battle. Its sights and sounds arouse a feeling of exaltation, compared to which, tame indeed is the sense of the sublime excited by all other great works, either of God or man." And again : "That which makes the thrilling interest of a battle is the personal incident. A battle so lifts a man out of himself that he scarcely recognizes his identity when peace returns, and with it the quiet occupations."

He was breveted Colonel United States Army, for gallant and meritorious services, with a commission bearing the date of the battle of Fredericksburg, and was warmly pressed by Burnside for a full Major-General's commission. His promotion, however, was of later date.

His next services in the field were at Chancellorsville, where he commanded the Third Division of the Fifth Corps, then commanded by Meade. He was posted upon the extreme left, where, near the brick house called the Chancellor house, he was sharply engaged with the enemy. In his testimony before the Joint Committee of Congress on the conduct of the war, he declared that he probably knew less in regard to the battle of Chancellorsville than any other battle he ever took part in. With other

* Letter of Gen. Humphreys to Wm. Swinton, May 10, 1866, *ut supra*.

† De Peyster.

distinguished officers he strongly disapproved of the order by which the army was withdrawn from its advanced position and compelled to fight a defensive instead of an offensive battle.* Many years after, in commenting on this battle, Gen. Humphreys said: "The Army of the Potomac did not fight at Chancellorsville. The Eleventh Corps, badly posted, was permitted to be surprised by overwhelming numbers, and routed. The Third Corps, aided by artillery, posted by Pleasonton, threw itself into the breach, arrested the forward movement of the enemy, and the next morning was allowed to sustain the attack of Lee's whole force for several hours, losing in killed and wounded a large part of its numbers. It was of course obliged to fall back upon the other portion of the army, the First, Second, Fifth and Twelfth Corps, in position near by, just in rear of Chancellorsville. Only parts of some of these corps were partially engaged in covering the withdrawal of the Third Corps. Sedgwick advancing from Fredericksburg, with the Sixth Corps and one Division of the Second Corps, was attacked by Lee, and forced back over the Rappahannock. Lee, in this operation, had 60,000 men, Longstreet's Corps being absent; Hooker not less than 90,000 men. It is not surprising, then, that the Army of Northern Virginia should have made a false estimate of its prowess, or at least of that of the Army of the Potomac."†

Shortly after the battle of Chancellorsville, Gen. Meade, in a private letter, dated May 19, 1863, wrote as follows: "I have lost nearly a division by the expiration of service of the two years and nine months men, so that I have had to break up Humphreys' Division, and he is going to take command of the division recently commanded by Gen. Berry in Sickles' Corps. I am very sorry to lose Humphreys. He is a most valuable officer, besides being an associate of the most agreeable kind."

The intimate relations between the two friends was, however, soon to be reestablished. A gentleman, whose knowledge is undoubted, writes: "The fact stands that when Gen. Meade was placed in command of the Army of the Potomac, the first man he thought of, and whom he called to his assistance was Gen. Humphreys. The reason why he was not his Chief of Staff at Gettysburg was solely due to Humphreys' own desire to command his division in the coming engagement. He thought that at that particular crisis he could render greater assistance in the position he then held. In addition to this he always had a great partiality for commanding troops, especially in a fight."‡

At Gettysburg, where Humphreys commanded the Second Division of the Third Corps—a division which had always been a favorite—he displayed not only coolness and valor, but consummate skill in handling

* Report on the Conduct of the War. 1865, Vol. I, pp. 61-65.

† Address of Maj. Gen. A. A. Humphreys on the Military Services of the late Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, at the Meade Memorial Meeting of the citizens of Philadelphia, Nov. 18, 1872. Washington, D. C., 1872.

‡ Letter of Col. George Meade to the writer. Testimony of Gen. Humphreys before the Committee on the Conduct of War. Report on the Conduct of the War, 1865, Vol. I, p. 388.

his troops. As he pressed forward to the town of Gettysburg on the evening of the first of July, he was informed that the enemy had made their appearance there in force; that the First and Eleventh Corps had been very hotly engaged, and that Gen. Reynolds had been killed. He was directed to follow a road about two miles west of the main one, and learned that Lieutenant Colonel Hayden, Assistant Inspector-General of the Corps, was present with a gentleman from Gettysburg, who acted as a guide for the route that Gen. Sickles wished him to take. Contrary to Gen. Humphreys' views who wished to move to the right so as to join Howard's left, Col. Hayden insisted that Gen. Sickles wished him to approach by the Black Horse Tavern road, which led towards the left directly to the enemy. With many misgivings Humphreys obeyed. His movement occupied considerable time owing to the crossings of Marsh run. He took the precaution of directing his column to move quietly as it approached the road, and to close up, as he expected to fall in with the enemy. He soon found the enemy posted in force, but unaware of his presence. He might have attacked them at daylight with the certainty of at least temporary success, but as he was three miles distant from the remainder of the army, he believed that such a course would be inconsistent with the general plan of operations of the commanding General. As soon as he ascertained the exact condition of things, he retraced his steps and bivouacked near Gettysburg about 1 A. M., on the 2d of July. This delayed him several hours, and greatly fatigued his men. It was a moonlight night, but hazy. The reference, which Gen. Humphreys makes to what others have admired as an exhibition of remarkable skill in extricating his division from a dangerous position, is one of characteristic modesty. He says: "It shows what can be done by accident. If any one had been directed to take a division to the rear of the enemy's army and get up as close as I did unperceived, it would have been thought exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to do it unnoticed."*

It was subsequently ascertained that Col. Hayden had entirely misapprehended Gen. Sickles' order, and that it had never been intended that the division should march by way of the Black Horse Tavern.

The next morning, the 2d, his division, forming the right of the Third Corps, was massed on a ridge of elevated ground between Cemetery Hill and Round Top, some four or five hundred yards in advance of the general line. This placed the entire corps in great danger. In the afternoon he was fiercely attacked in front and flank, and sustained some of the hottest fighting of the day. While under a heavy fire of infantry and artillery—"I have never been under a hotter artillery and musketry fire combined," he states—just at the moment he found it necessary to get his own artillery out of the way as quickly as possible, and advance his whole line to pour a fire upon the charging enemy, he received an order from Gen. Birney informing him that Gen. Sickles had been wounded, and that he

* Testimony of Gen. Humphreys. Report on the Conduct of the War. 1865. Vol. 1, p. 389. *Ut supra*, p. 390.

had succeeded to the command of the Corps, and that his division was going to fall back and form in line extending towards Humphreys' right from the Round Top ridge in rear of and oblique to his present line, and that he must change front and form on that line. In complying with this order, he had to change from front to rear. While making the movement, the troops on his left failed to stop on the Round Top ridge, but passed beyond it. Humphreys instantly extended his line to the left to close up the aperture, and was attacked on his flanks as well as on his front. For a moment he thought the day was lost. Just then he received an order to fall back to the Ridge, which he did slowly and in good order, stubbornly contesting every inch of ground, and suffering a very heavy loss. "I did not fall back rapidly," he says, "because I disliked to fall back at double quick before the enemy, and besides I did not suppose I could rally my troops, or that any troops could be rallied at the place where the line was to be formed, if the movement backward was made rapidly." He reached the ridge, leaving three guns behind, the horses of which had been killed, and rallied the remnants of his division. Quickly wheeling, as the enemy came up, he poured in a fire, and his troops, joining in with the Second Corps, drove back the foe, recovering the lost guns. His men did not wait for orders, but dashed impetuously forward, and as there were so few of them, he went with them to bring them back before they got too far from the main line. By that time it was dusk, and the fighting ceased for the day.*

On the third day, while moving into position, he was fiercely shelled by the enemy, and about four o'clock in the afternoon formed his division into columns of attack, and prepared to advance. While in this position he lost some valuable officers, as well as men. No orders were given to advance, and as the enemy did not renew their attack, which was the great feature of the day, he returned to his position on the left, where he remained until the army moved from Gettysburg.

The services of Humphreys in this battle added greatly to his renown. His skillful handling of his troops and his desperate conflict and coolness in the peach orchard, where his son was wounded at his side, added new laurels to his chaplet, and resulted, on the 13th March, 1865, in a brevet as Brigadier-General United States Army.

Four days after the battle of Gettysburg he accepted the position tendered him by Gen. Meade, as Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac, which he held from 8th July, 1863, to 25th November, 1864. He bade farewell to his command in these well-weighed words of commendation: "In parting from this celebrated division, after having commanded it for the brief period of fifty days, I trust that I may be excused for expressing my admiration for its high soldierly qualities. It is impossible to pass it in review even without perceiving that its ranks are filled with men that are soldiers in the best meaning of this term, and that it possesses in the

* *Ut supra*, p. 392. Swinton's Army of the Potomac. Gettysburg, the second day, pp. 342-355.

grade of commissioned officers, men whose skill, courage and accomplishments would grace any service."

As Chief of Staff he was engaged in the action of Manassas Gap; the Rapidan operations; the action on the Rappahannock and the combat of Bristoe Station; the operations of Mine Run, the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna, Tolopotomy, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, the Weldon Railroad, Peebles' Farm and the Boydton Plank Road.*

During the fall and winter of 1863-'64, he thrice planned the surprise and destruction of Lee, but his plans were frustrated partially by disobedience of orders and partially by modifications to which he did not assent, and the attempts were barren of results. As he has modestly refrained from specific statements in his little book, "Gettysburg to the Rapidan," the facts can be gathered only from sources not yet public. He served his chief with absolute fidelity and staunch friendship, but his services, though of great importance, could not be fully appreciated by the public. A competent military critic has remarked that "what Von Moltke was to the King of Prussia, afterwards Emperor of Germany, what Blumenthal was to the Crown Prince, Humphreys was to Meade in many respects."

On the 26th November, 1864, he resigned his position as Chief of Staff, to succeed Hancock in the command of the Second Corps, or, properly speaking, the combined Second and Third Corps, a fusion of which he did not approve as destructive of the *corps de esprit* of both.†

In a private letter of General Meade, dated November 25, 1864, he says: "Hancock leaves us to-morrow, he having a leave of absence, after which he will be assigned to recruiting duty. Humphreys takes his place. The change in my position has rendered it unnecessary to have an officer of Humphreys' rank as Chief of Staff. I deemed it due to him to suggest his name as Hancock's successor."

On assuming his new command, he said: "It is natural that I should feel some diffidence in succeeding to the command of so distinguished a soldier as Major-General Hancock. I can only promise you that I shall try to do my duty and preserve your reputation unsullied, relying upon you to sustain me by that skill and courage which you have so conspicuously displayed on so many fields."

From that time forth, his career is marked by a series of brilliant successes. He now had a fair opportunity to display his capabilities as a general.

The winter of 1864-'65 had been severe and the Confederate army suffered much from want of food. Their supplies were brought by wagons from Hicksford on the Weldon Railroad, forty miles south of Petersburg. To break up this route of supply, Humphreys was ordered to coöperate with the Fifth Corps, which, in turn, was to support Gregg's cavalry of the Army of the Potomac. On the 6th of February, Humphreys began his operations by throwing a bridge across Hatcher's run. On the 6th, a se-

* Statement of services, *ut supra*.

† "Bird's-Eye View of the War," by Col. Dodge.

vere action took place, which resulted in the extension of the Federal entrenchments to the left as far as Hatcher's run at the Vaughn Road crossing. Humphreys was on the extreme left, with the Fifth Corps massed in support. On March 25th, Lee made his desperate attack upon Fort Steadman, a blow aimed at the Union base of supplies at City Point, which, though well conceived and gallantly executed, was frustrated by the good conduct of Gen. Hartranft. On the same day Humphreys and Wright, availing themselves of the opportunity thus offered, attacked Lee upon their respective fronts, and accomplished most valuable results, which contributed to the success of Wright's assault on the morning of the 2d of April, by which the enemy's entrenchments were carried, and Lee forced to abandon his lines. On the 30th, Sheridan had his fight at Dinwiddie Court House, and on this day when Warren met with temporary disaster, while advancing to cut Lee's communication with his extreme right, Humphreys suddenly launched his first division under Miles against the successful Confederates, striking their front and flank, "withering their triumph," driving them back, capturing three hundred prisoners, and advanced to the White Oak road, the first time that this important thoroughfare had been reached by our troops. On the 1st and 2d of April, the Second Corps carried the works in their front, and Miles again won laurels at Sutherland Station.

On the evening of April 2d, Lee began his retreat. Early on the morning of the 3d, Petersburg was occupied by General Willcox, and at 8 A. M. Richmond fell, and the great pursuit began; the cavalry, under Sheridan, supported by the Fifth Corps under Warren, leading the advance, while the Second Corps followed, rapidly building bridges and repairing roads. Sheridan, with Crook's Division and the Fifth Corps, arrived, at about 4 P. M., at Jetersville, and entrenched there, so as to dispute Lee's attempt to join Johnston. On the morning of the 4th, Lee was at Amelia Court House, but instead of attempting to break his way through Sheridan's lines, dallied there to bring up his baggage. The delay was fatal. On the 5th, the Second Corps reached Jetersville, followed by the Sixth. In the evening, Lee finding the forces in his front too strong to be attacked, turned north, and pushed towards Farmville in search of supplies. Early on the 6th, the Army of the Potomac moved out, "like the ribs of a fan," from Jetersville, in the direction of Amelia Court House, where they expected to meet the Army of Northern Virginia in battle array. But, instead of awaiting them there, Lee had nearly slipped by their front westward. While Sheridan and his immortal cavalry, supported by the Fifth Corps, were dealing with the advance bodies of Lee's army, Humphreys was fighting and driving the compact and well-organized forces that remained, hanging persistently upon their flank and inflicting wounds from which, as has been said, "Lee bled to death." The conspicuous service rendered by Humphreys was in retarding and crippling the retreat of the main body, thus rendering it possible for the cavalry to head off the advance. On the 6th, at 8 A. M., Humphreys caught up with the

enemy at Flat creek, his men partly fording the stream, armpit deep, and partly crossing it upon a hastily improvised bridge, and after having been engaged in seven stand-up fights over a distance of fourteen miles, and carried several partially entrenched positions defended by artillery, closed the day with a sharp action at nightfall with Gordon's division at Perkinson's Mill, near the mouth of Sailor's creek. In the meanwhile Ewell's division, "split off by Humphreys," fell into the hands of the cavalry at Little Sailor's creek, and surrendered about six thousand men.*

During the night, the enemy again slipped away, but in the morning, shortly after daylight, Humphreys swept down upon High Bridge, and secured the only viaduct across the Appomatox which the Confederates had not burned or succeeded in destroying in their hurried flight. Four miles further on, at the Heights of Farmville, or Cumberland Church, Humphreys again fell upon a solid body of the enemy, and as the roar of his guns burst upon the ear, Lee is reported to have said, "There is that Second Corps again." Here Humphreys held him until night, having sent word to General Meade that Lee's whole remaining force, about 18,000 infantry, had been overtaken, and suggesting that a corps should attack Lee from the direction of Farmville, four miles off, at the same time that the Second Corps attacked from the opposite direction. The river near Farmville proved impassable, and Humphreys was obliged to contend with the enemy without support. The enemy's position was naturally strong and well entrenched, and though Humphreys failed to carry it, he clung so persistently to his purpose as to succeed in detaining Lee there until night, a loss of invaluable time which he could not regain by night marching. He therefore lost the supplies awaiting him at Appomatox station, and Sheridan with his cavalry, and Ord with the Fifth and Twenty-fourth Corps were enabled to post themselves across his path at Appomatox Court House, about fifty miles further on.

Had Humphreys failed to secure High Bridge, had no infantry crossed the Appomatox on the 7th, Lee would, in all probability, have effected his escape. He could have reached New Store that night, Appomatox station on the afternoon of the 8th, obtained the rations there, and moved that evening towards Lynchburg. A march next day, would have brought him

*I am under obligations to Brevet Major-General (S. N. Y.) J. Watts DePeyster for assistance in the preparation of this account. In addition to the examination of several papers written by himself, which he kindly placed in my hands, I have studied the maps in his elaborate work, *La Royale, The Grand Hunt of the Army of the Potomac*, which was printed for private circulation, the value of which is acknowledged by General Humphreys in the preface to "The Virginia Campaign of '64-'65."

The remaining authorities are: "With General Sheridan in Lee's Last Campaign;" "The Virginia Campaign of '64-'65;" "Scribner's Campaigns of the Civil War;" *The Histories of the Civil War*, by Draper, Lossing, and Harper's *General History*; Swinton's "History of the Army of the Potomac;" with a number of special papers, addresses and reports. I must also acknowledge the assistance of Major Jos. G. Rosengarten and Col. Jno. P. Nicholson.

to Lynchburg, where he would have been safe.* The value of Humphreys' services in crossing the Appomatox and detaining Lee all day at the Heights of Farmville or Cumberland Church will be appreciated, when it is remembered that Ord's two infantry corps did not reach Appomatox Court House until 10 o'clock in the morning of the 9th of April, and that it was the sight of Ord's infantry supporting Sheridan, that convinced Gordon that further fighting was useless and escape impossible.

About half-past eight o'clock on the evening of the 7th, when still in close contact with Lee, as has been described, Adjutant-General Seth Williams brought to General Humphreys Grant's first letter to Lee asking the surrender of Lee's army. This letter Humphreys was requested to have delivered to General Lee. He sent it at once through his picket line, at the same time authorizing a truce for an hour, to enable the enemy to gather up their wounded. At this time the opposing troops were but a few hundred yards apart. Lee's answer was brought back within an hour, and General Williams started at once to return to General Grant at Farmville by the circuitous route of High Bridge. The next morning Humphreys resumed the pursuit. While on the march, Grant's second letter to Lee was brought to Humphreys, who sent it to Lee through Fitz-Lee's cavalry rear guard which was then close in Humphreys' front. Lee's answer was received by Humphreys about dusk, as he halted for a three hours' rest, two miles beyond New Store, after a march of twenty miles. He again pushed forward, but after a march of twenty-six miles, was compelled to halt his column at midnight, on finding his men dropping out of the ranks from want of food and fatigue. On the morning of the 9th Humphreys received Grant's third letter to Lee, which was delivered to him in person by Colonel Whittier, of Humphreys' staff. Lee's answer was delivered by the hands of Colonel Whittier to General Meade, who forwarded it to General Grant, who had then left the route followed by the Second and Sixth Corps, and taken a cross-road which led to Appomatox Court House, and along or near the routes of Sheridan and Ord. Had Grant remained on the route of the Second and Sixth Corps, the surrender would have taken place before midday. As it was, Grant having ridden forward, the meeting between himself and Lee did not take place until one o'clock P. M., and the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia was not announced to the Army of the Potomac until four o'clock. The remainder of this celebrated correspondence passed through the lines of General Sheridan.†

In the meantime General Humphreys, closely followed by the Sixth Corps, pressed forward, and began to overtake Longstreet, when he received two earnest verbal requests from General Lee, by a staff officer, with a flag of truce, not to press forward upon him, but to halt, as negotiations were going on for a surrender. As Humphreys had been notified

* The Virginia Campaign of '64-'65, p. 391; Scribner's Campaigns of the Civil War, Vol. xii.

† The Virginia Campaign of '64-'65, p. 394.

that the correspondence was in no way to interfere with his operations, he twice sent word to Lee's staff officer that the request could not be complied with, and that he must withdraw from the ground at once. At this time, he was in full sight on the road, not a hundred yards distant from the head of the Second Corps. Humphreys at once formed his corps for attack, the Sixth Corps formed on the right, which, at the moment it was about to begin, was suspended by the arrival of General Meade, who granted a truce for an hour. Hostilities were never resumed. The Great Civil War was at an end.

These facts are sufficient to illustrate the relentless character of Humphreys' pursuit, and attest his ability as a corps commander in handling men worn out by hunger, fatigue, long marches and severe fighting. They fitly close his active military services in the field.

In the grand review of the Army of the Potomac, at Washington, the Second Corps participated, and one of the noticeable features of the occasion was the appearance of General Humphreys' staff mounted upon white horses, a delicate compliment to the noble grey who had carried him so gallantly through the fatigues of the march and the perils of battle. The old war-horse still lives, with but slight abatement of her wonted spirit.

General Humphreys was in command of the District of Pennsylvania, in the Middle Department, from July 28 to December 9th, 1865.

From December, 1865, to August of the following year, he was in charge of the examination of the Mississippi levees, a work rendered necessary by the neglect and damage of the war.

On August 8, 1866, he was appointed to the command of the Corps of Engineers, with the rank of Brigadier-General and Chief of Engineers, serving in this capacity until his retirement from active service, at his own request, on June 30, 1879. He thoroughly organized this branch of the service. The work of the general office was divided into four divisions, and an officer of special fitness placed in charge of each, while officers of rank and experience were assigned to important districts and duties.

He served as a Member of the Lighthouse Board, from 1870 to 1874; of the Commission to examine into canal routes across the Isthmus connecting North and South America, from 1872 to 1877; of the Board on Washington and Georgetown Harbor improvements from 1872 to 1873; of the Revising Board of Bulkhead and Pier Line of Brooklyn from May, 1872, to June, 1879, of Staten Island from August, 1878, to June, 1879, and of Hudson river (Troy to Hudson), June, 1877, to June, 1879; of Board for Survey of Baltimore Harbor and adjacent waters from May, 1876, to June, 1879; of the Washington Monument Commission from January, 1877, to June, 1879; of the Advisory Board to Massachusetts Harbor Commissioners from January, 1877, to June, 1879, and of the Examining Board of Moline Water Power Company contracts during 1877.*

In the civil duties appertaining to his profession he was as eminent as in

* Statement of Services, *ut supra*.

his military duties in the field. In 1857 he was chosen a member of the American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia, Pa., of which both his grandfather and father had been members, and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences of Boston, Mass., in 1863; a corporator of the National Academy of Science in 1863; an Honorary Member of the Imperial Royal Geological Institute of Vienna in 1862, of the Royal Institute of Science and Art of Lombardy, Milan, Italy, in 1864; and corresponding member of the Geographical Society of Paris, and of the Austrian Society of Engineer Architects, and an Honorary Member of the Italian Geological Society in 1880. The Degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him by Harvard College, July 15, 1868.

After retirement from the Bureau, the last intellectual labor performed by General Humphreys was in the composition of two books, which together constitute a military classic and a mine of important matter relating to the history of the war—"The Virginia Campaign of '64-'65," and "From Gettysburg to the Rapidan"—the latter being, properly, an introduction to the first.

The amount of work bestowed upon them was immense, and the results exhibit extraordinary power of intellectual compression. Indeed for many they will prove too concise and dry to be interesting, but no one can be at a loss to understand the operations described. With entire freedom from ostentation or rhetorical parade he closes the former book in these words: "It has not seemed to me necessary to attempt an eulogy upon the Army of the Potomac or the Army of Northern Virginia." These were his merits as a writer—precision, brevity, simplicity—a style suited to his subjects, but not one to attract the general reader.

One of the most gratifying personal tributes to General Humphreys was the presentation of a memorial sword by the citizens of Philadelphia, on the evening of the 4th of July 1866,* at the building of the Union

* THE SWORD presented to Major-General A. A. Humphreys, U. S. Army, by his fellow-citizens of Philadelphia, 1866. *E Pluribus Unum*. Liberty and Union

This on one side; on the other side:

Yorktown, April 15th, to May 4th, 1862.
Williamsburg, May 6th, 1862.
Chickahominy, May and June, 1862.
Malvern Hill, July 1st, 1862.
Fredericksburg, December 13th, 1862.
Chancellorsville, May 1863.
Gettysburg, July 1st, 2d, 3d, 1863.
Manassas Gap, July 1863.
Rappahannock, October to November 7th, 1863.
Mine Run, November 29th to December 3d, 1863.
Rapidan, February 1864.
The Wilderness, May 6th and 7th, 1864.
Spottsylvania Court House, May 9th to 20th, 1864.
The south Anna, May 21st to 25th, 1864.
Totopotomy, May 28th, 29th, 30th, 1864.
Cold Harbor, June 1st, 2d, 3d, 1864.
Petersburgh, June 16th, 17th, 18th, 1864.
The Mine, July 30th, 1864.
The Weldon Railroad, August 18th, 25th, 1864.
The Boydton Road, October 27th, 28th, 1864.
Hatcher's Run, February 4th, 5th, 6th, 1865.
The Fall of Petersburg, March 25th to April 3d, 1865.
Pursuit of Lee.
Sailor's Creek, April 6th, 1865.
The Heights of Farmville, April 7th, 1865.
The Surrender of Lee, April 9th, 1865.

League. From his boyhood, he had been almost a stranger to his native city, and was personally unknown to many of her leading citizens, but his distinguished scientific and military services had become a part of the imperishable history of the nation, and entitled him to this tribute of respect, affection and gratitude. The lofty conception which he entertained of his noble profession, inspired the words with which he received the gift: "The sword is regarded as the emblem of manly virtue, of a just mind, a courageous heart, and a gentle spirit. No token of your regard for me as a soldier and as a man could be more acceptable, and, perhaps, I most fittingly acknowledge your gift in saying that I shall try so to wear this beautiful embodiment of all the qualities a sword should possess, that its spotless blade may never be stained, nor its brilliant lustre dimmed."

This was his ideal of the model soldier. It is not too much to say that in thought, word and deed he fulfilled and illustrated it.

At the Meade memorial meeting of the citizens of Philadelphia, held on the 18th November, 1872, Gen. Humphreys delivered an address upon the military services of General Meade. It is an able and luminous review of complicated operations, and without the aid of turgid adjectives or pretentious nouns, embodies the highest tribute ever paid by a military critic to a great commander. After a thorough discussion of the question why Meade did not capture Lee after the battle of Gettysburg, General Humphreys declares: "After a careful examination of the subject so far as I am capable of forming an opinion, I am led to the conclusion that Meade, at Gettysburg, had a more difficult task than Wellington at Waterloo, and performed it equally well, although he had no Blücher to turn the scale." From such a critic what praise could be higher, and yet what could be simpler in point of expression?

In drawing to a conclusion this imperfect review of the career of Gen. Humphreys, it will be proper to quote a few carefully selected expressions of opinion by men qualified by their public positions and professional attainments to form a competent judgment.

Gen. De Peyster says: "In the death of A. A. Humphreys, the United States lost without question their most thoroughly scientific engineer and soldier and general combined; illustrious in every branch of the service which he adorned; equally able as an engineer for the use of inert materials, and as a general for the handling of living masses, and as a soldier for setting an example of intrepidity, * * * * * in topography, geodesy and dynamics he was equally eminent, and his pen was not more capable of demonstrating the laws which govern natural cataclysms than his sword in cutting the Gordian knot of difficulties by his bold strategy and bolder tactics."

Gen. Hancock has declared "That if he were an absolute monarch, and could dispose of a large army; he knew of no one whom he would place at its head with such perfect confidence as Humphreys."

Another major-general of distinction has said: "Humphreys' leader-

ship and soldiership were so unobtrusive that the country was not aware of what an able man it possessed in him."

"General Humphreys," wrote a gallant soldier, afterwards occupying an important civil position, "holds a place in my estimation as a soldier whose skill, bravery, and modesty are second to none, and whose real service was infinitely more valuable than that of many officers more talked about in the newspapers."

Another writes: "If Humphreys had enjoyed a more influential position the Northern people would have enjoyed many more occasions to rejoice. This must have been the case if the power of handling large bodies of troops; if rare science and its test—application; if calmness and clearness of judgment under fire; if energy, undaunted courage and self-forgetfulness in view of results have any effect upon military operations."

Major Bundy styled him "a scientific soldier, a wise and safe counselor."

A military critic as far back as in 1869, wrote: "As a fighting division commander, as a proficient in the handling of a corps; as a consummate chief of staff of the Army of the Potomac; as an intrepid gentleman; as a faithful soldier, and as a remarkable engineer, Gen. Humphreys had no superior. His survey and reports upon the Mississippi will be as proud a memorial of his engineering capacity as his military record, beginning with the Florida war, in 1836, is a record which is without a stain, as rich in historic deeds and services as the sacred shield of Lancelot."

An ardent admirer and devoted friend pays the following tribute: "A great and at the same time a good man, who attained the ripest age with undiminished faculties; a magnificent soldier who combined the calmest intrepidity with executive ability in battle, a mind capable of working with the nicest precision amid the wildest churme of conflict under exceptional circumstances of peril; a scientist of views most comprehensive and practical; of knowledge vast and developed."

These are the amaranths with which his companions in arms have crowned his name.

In private life, General Humphreys was courteous, kind, gentle and affectionate. His love and enjoyment of home were sincere and unaffected. He married, June 19, 1839, Rebecca, the youngest daughter of Henry Hollingsworth, one of the most respected citizens of Philadelphia, and had two sons and two daughters, of whom the former and one daughter survive. To him, wife, daughters, sisters, were not merely the objects of affection, but the embodiment of that perfect womanliness at whose shrine he knelt in reverence. His mind idealized all that it dwelt upon and both absorbed and imparted radiance. He had a refined and cultivated taste for art and literature and in some respects was fastidious to an extreme degree.

His attachments to the home of his ancestors were strong and peculiar. No rage for modern improvement or convenience could ever induce him to change the structure or arrangement of the old and strange house he had inherited, jumbled together with the additions of several generations. Its lowly roof and straggling sheds embowered in vines were sacred. The

ivy that clambered about the windows, the venerable chestnut trees, the hirsute shrubbery, the old pump, surrounded by a hedge of lilacs, were the objects of his interested care. In the quiet burying-ground on the hill, I have seen the great soldier, whose fame had penetrated Europe, bend in respectful silence over the stone that marked the grave of some forgotten relative, or have listened, as he trod the well-loved fields of his childhood, to his recollections of those joyous days.

Such was the man. As simple in his greatness as he was great in his simplicity; of noble strength in body, heart, and brain, a union of opposites, a man who had devoted his whole life to the public good, and yet one of whom the public knew but little, partly because of his modesty, partly because his favorite studies were abstruse and recondite, but chiefly because he had none of the instincts of the politician, and scorned the artifices by which so many rise to popularity and fame.

He died on the 27th of December, A. D. 1883, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, while seated in his chair, without pain, and without a struggle.

"The best death," said the great Roman, "is that which is the least expected."

Fellow-members of the American Philosophical Society—In the bright galaxy of names which adorn our rolls there are stars of the first magnitude, whose glories have fixed the gaze of nations. Historians, statesmen, jurists, physicians, soldiers and philosophers—our great men have walked upon the high places of the earth. Their exertions have manifested the noblest intellectual power; their industry has tilled every field of activity; their studies have sounded every depth of knowledge; their daring zeal has penetrated to the remotest bounds of science; their devotion has made willing sacrifice of property and life; their success has won the highest meed of honor. Our Franklin, our Rittenhouse, our Bartram, our Wistar, our Kane, our Binney, our Sharswood, and he, whose recent death we all deplore, that grand old man, whose noble life was spent in acts of public usefulness and private benevolence which have endeared his name and consecrated his example—our Price—are they not all men of whose achievements we can boast without affectation, of whose deeds we can speak with pardonable pride?

Among these we now enroll the name of Humphreys. No chiseled marble preserves his lineaments, no lofty columns proclaim his worth, no demagogues attempt to conjure with his rod, but long after the fierce passions of our civil strife shall have burned themselves to ashes, long after his services to the cause of the Union and free government shall have risen to their proper place in military annals, when Oblivion shall have wrapped Secession in her mantle, and fraternal affection shall have buried the weapons of war, the memory of his scientific labors will live as his most enduring monument. He tamed the raging of the floods; he snatched from devastation the most fertile and magnificent valley in the world—the seat of future empire—and opened up the great Father of Waters to the commerce of the globe.

Let us add with pride—he was a Pennsylvanian and a Philadelphian.